

Salmonellosis

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Salmonellosis

Salmonellosis is an illness caused by the bacterium *Salmonella* of which there are numerous types. **Salmonellosis** most commonly causes an intestinal illness but occasionally may infect the blood stream. The bacterium is passed in the stool of infected individuals.

Who gets this disease?

Any person can become infected with *Salmonella*. The disease is more likely to cause a severe infection in the very young, the very old and in people with underlying diseases, such as cancer.

How is it spread?

In the child care setting, *Salmonella* is usually spread by the stool-to-mouth route. The bacterium can also be spread by contaminated food or drink. It is commonly found in uncooked or undercooked meat (especially beef), poultry and eggs.

Salmonella can also be spread to children and adults from infected pets such as turtles, lizards, snakes, dogs, cats, ducklings, chickens and other birds. (Note: Because of this hazard, these types of animals should not be in child care facilities.)

What are the symptoms?

The intestinal illness caused by *Salmonella* is characterized by diarrhea (mild or severe), fever, abdominal cramps and occasional vomiting.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms generally appear from 12-36 hours after exposure, but range from 6- to 72-hours.

Can a person have this disease and not know it?

Yes. Some people may not have symptoms serious enough to cause them to seek medical attention. In some cases of *Salmonella* infection, after the diarrhea illness is over the organism may be excreted in the stool for months to over a year. This is called the carrier state.

What is the treatment?

Although most people with salmonellosis will recover on their own, in some cases *healthcare providers* may prescribe antibiotics. Some antibiotics may

lengthen the amount of time the bacteria are found in the stool, however.

How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

1. Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet *and diapering children*.
2. Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food.
3. Be certain all foods in the child care center are thoroughly cooked - especially beef, poultry and eggs.
4. Any leftover food should be discarded.
5. Food preparation surfaces (e.g., tables, counters, cutting boards, kitchen utensils) should be carefully washed and disinfected after preparing food.
6. Unpasteurized milk (goat or cow) is frequently contaminated with *Salmonella* and other bacteria; it should **not** be used in a child care setting.
7. Staff with positive stool cultures for *Salmonella* should not work in a child care facility.
8. Keep children with diarrhea at home.
9. High-risk animals like turtles and lizards should not be in child care settings.

Who should be excluded?

Infected persons shall be excluded from food handling, from working in a child care facility and from direct care of hospitalized and institutionalized patients until stool cultures are free of *Salmonella* on two consecutive specimens collected not less than 24-hours apart. If antibiotics have been taken, the initial culture shall be obtained at least 48-hours after the last dose.

Reportable?

Yes, Salmonellosis is reportable by New Hampshire law.